

Application No. 09/628,880
Filed: July 31, 2000
TC Art Unit: 2151
Confirmation No.: 4970

REMARKS

In response to an Office Action mailed on March 25, 2004, Applicant respectfully requests that the above-listed Amendments be entered and the Application be reconsidered in light of the following remarks. With entry of the above-listed Amendments, Claims 1, 8, 13, 20, 25, 26 and 27 are currently amended. Of these, Claims 1, 13, 25, 26 and 27 are independent, and the remaining claims are dependent.

The Applicant appreciates the Examiner's telephone call of April 2, 2004 to withdraw the reference in Paragraph 1 of the above-referenced Office Action to fees under 37 CFR 1.17(r). The Applicant understands from the Examiner's telephone call that no such fees have been charged.

Claims 1, 8, 13, 20, 25, 26 and 27 are amended to correct minor grammatical or typographic errors without making substantive changes to the scope of these claims. Twenty-seven claims are presented for examination.

The Examiner rejected Claims 1-27 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 5,819,092 to Ferguson, *et al.* ("Ferguson"). Ferguson discloses a visually oriented software development tool for designing, constructing and modifying on-line computer services. (Col. 6, Lines 65-67.) Ferguson's visual editing system can be used to create commercial online computer services. (Abstract.) Ferguson's system includes several tools, including an "Online Designer," "Fee Setter," "Script Editor" and "Help Editor." The Online Designer tool provides graphical screen displays and cursor controls, such as a mouse, to enable a designer to design an on-line service. For example, the designer can create hypermedia documents that include on-screen input forms with text fields, checkboxes, option buttons, drop-down list boxes and hyperlinks. The designer can create scripts to control commercial transactions conducted through these forms. (Col. 10, lines 12-61.) A "Hypermedia Editor" is used to create interactive elements of a service by creating an input form and creating event scripts that process user inputs into the form. (Col. 13, lines 14-23.) A service created by Ferguson's tool can access real-time data sources, such as an inventory database to check available stock. (Col. 11, line 61 to col. 12, line 5.) Scripts written by the designer can query databases with keywords typed by users into the forms. (Col. 27, lines 41-67.) In other words, Ferguson provides a system for creating HTML web pages.

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In contrast, the present invention provides methods and systems for automatically parsing documents, such as web pages, to identify objects on the pages and for forming lists of "metalinks" to information related to the objects. Unlike Ferguson, the present invention is not related to creating web pages or other documents. Embodiments of the present invention are typically used when a user views a web page or other document, i.e. after the document has been created. In an example of using one embodiment of the present invention, a user views a web page or other document. The applicant's system parses the web page or other document for words, word phrases, images or other objects and forwards a first list of the objects to a metadata server. Related information may be available for some of the objects on the first list. The metadata server responds with a second list of objects for which related information is available. The applicant's system presents the second list to the user. If the user selects one of the objects on the second list, the applicant's system searches a database for information regarding the selected object and displays information related to the object to the user.

The Examiner cited Ferguson FIGS. 1, 5 and 12 and Col. 8, Line 4 to Col. 10, Line 61 and Col. 15, Lines 25-59 as disclosing all that is recited in Claim 1. The Examiner cited Ferguson's disclosure of a hypermedia document that contains images or text describing goods and services as anticipating "parsing a document." As noted above, Ferguson's visual editing system is used for creating hypermedia documents. Ferguson does not, however, disclose parsing such documents, either while they are being created or thereafter. Consequently, Ferguson's disclosure does not meet the "parsing" limitation of Claim 1.

The Examiner cited Ferguson's disclosure that a user can initiate an electronic transaction (e.g. to download, price, purchase, rent, reserve, etc. a hyperdocument or goods or services described by the hyperdocument) as anticipating the "document including a number of objects." Electronic transactions, such as downloading or pricing, are actions, not "objects," so it is not believed that an ability to initiate a transaction anticipates the recited "objects." A user of a service created by Ferguson's system initiates a transaction by invoking a hyperlink, entering text or activating a control (such as a button or pull-down list). However, neither this user activity nor any developer activity performed while creating the hyperdocument involves parsed objects.

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The Examiner cited Ferguson's disclosure of a user initiating an electronic transaction using an online service as anticipating "forming a list of said objects for which related information is available and presenting said list to a user," as recited in Claim 1. Nowhere does Ferguson disclose forming a list of objects, regardless of whether information is available in relation to the objects or not. A user of a service created by Ferguson's system invokes a hyperlink, makes a text entry or activates a control (such as a button or pull-down list) to initiate one of these electronic transactions. However, neither this user activity, nor any developer activity performed while creating the hyperdocument, forms a list of objects. Furthermore, nowhere does Ferguson disclose "presenting said list to a user."

The Examiner cited Ferguson's disclosure of accessing an electronic database that contains data relevant to the user's transaction as anticipating "detecting a selection of one of said objects in said list by said user and searching a database for information regarding said selected one of said objects in said list." As noted, Ferguson does not form a list of objects, nor does Ferguson present such a list to the user, so Ferguson cannot disclose "detecting a selection of one of said objects." Even if, *arguendo*, Ferguson's electronic transactions were objects, Ferguson does not disclose presenting a list of these transactions to the user, and users of hyperdocuments created by Ferguson's visual editing system do not select transactions from a list.

Thus, Ferguson does not disclose "parsing a document." Ferguson does not disclose documents that "includ[e] a number of objects" nor "forming a list of those of said objects for which related information is available and presenting said list to a user." Ferguson does not disclose "detecting a selection of one of said objects in said list by said user" nor "searching a database for information regarding said selected one of said objects in said list." Finally, Ferguson does not disclose "displaying information from said database related to said selected one of said objects in said list to said user." No art of record, alone or in combination, discloses, teaches or suggests a method for enabling information association, as recited in Claim 1. For at least this reason, Claim 1 is believed to be allowable.

The Examiner rejected Claims 13, 25, 26 and 27 for the same reasons as Claim 1. Claims 13, 25, 26 and 27 are believed to be allowable for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1.

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Claims 2-12 and 14-24 depend directly or indirectly from Claim 1, 13, 25, 26 or 27. Claims 2-12 and 14-24 are, therefore, believed to be allowable, for at least the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 1.

For all the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that the present Application is in a condition for allowance, and such action is earnestly solicited. The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present Application.

Respectfully submitted,

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